CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1. Use of a replication competent herpes virus which
 - (a) lacks a functional wild-type HSV ICP27 gene; and
 - (b) comprises a nucleic acid encoding an ICP27 protein, or a functional equivalent thereof from a non-HSV herpes virus, which allows replication of said herpes virus to occur and which has a reduced ability to inhibit RNA splicing compared to wild-type HSV ICP27

in the production of an adeno-associated virus (AAV) vector.

- 2. Use according to claim 1 wherein said herpes virus is HSV-1 or HSV-2.
- 3. Use according to claim 1 or 2 wherein said ICP27 protein is a functional equivalent of ICP27 from a non-HSV herpes virus.
- 4. Use according to claim 3 wherein said functional equivalent is mutated.
- 5. Use according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said ICP27 protein is a mutant HSV ICP27 protein.
- 6. Use according to claim 5 wherein the mutant protein is an HSV ICP27 protein comprising an R480H/V496I double mutation.
- Use according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the herpes virus is not an HSV which further lacks its wild-type functional equivalent of the HSV ICP27 gene.
- 8. Use according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the herpes virus further comprises AAV rep and cap genes.
- 9. Use according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the herpes virus further comprises an AAV vector sequence.

10. Use according to claim 8 or 9 wherein said AAV rep and cap genes and/or said AAV vector sequence are inserted into the UL43 locus, US5 locus or LAT locus of said herpes virus.

- 11. A replication competent herpes virus as defined in any one of claims 8 to 10.
- 12. A method of producing an AAV vector comprising:
 - (i) introducing into producer cells:
 - (a) a herpes virus which lacks a functional wild-type HSV ICP27 gene;
 - (b) comprises a nucleic acid encoding an ICP27 protein, or a functional equivalent thereof from a non-HSV herpes virus, which allows replication of said herpes virus to occur and which has a reduced ability to inhibit RNA splicing compared to wild-type HSV ICP27;
 - (c) AAV rep and cap genes; and
 - (d) an AAV vector sequence; and
 - (ii) isolating the AAV vector particles produced.
- 13. A method according to claim 12 wherein said herpes virus (a) comprises said nucleic acid (b).
- 14. A method according to claim 12 wherein said nucleic acid (b) is stably or transiently infected into said producer cells.
- 15. A method according to any one of claims 12 to 14 wherein said AAV rep and cap genes (c) and/or said AAV vector sequence (d) are inserted into said herpes virus (a).
- 16. A method according to claim 15 wherein said AAV rep and cap genes (c) and/or said AAV vector sequence (d) are inserted into the UL43 locus, US5 locus or LAT locus of said herpes virus.

17. A method according to any one of claims 12 to 14 wherein said AAV rep and cap genes and/or said AAV vector sequence (d) are stably or transiently transfected into said producer cells.

- 18. A method according to claim 14 or 17 wherein said producer cells are stably transfected prior to infection with said herpes virus (a).
- A method according to claim 14 or 17 wherein said producer cells are transiently transfected before infection with said herpes virus (a).
- 20. A method according to claim 14 or 17 wherein said producer cells are transiently transfected after infection with said herpes virus (a).
- 21. A method according to any one of claims 12 to 17 wherein the producer cells are BHK or Vero cells.
- 22. An AAV vector produced by a method of any one of claims 12 to 21.
- 23. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an AAV vector according to claim 20 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent
- 24. A method of producing a pharmaceutical composition comprising mixing an AAV vector according to claim 22 with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.
- 25. A method of producing a pharmaceutical composition comprising carrying out the method of any one of claims 12 to 21 and formulating said isolated AAV vector particles with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.
- 26. A method of gene therapy comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of an AAV vector according to claim 22 to a patient in need thereof.

- 27. A kit for producing an AAV vector comprising:
 - (a) a replication competent herpes virus which lacks a functional wild-type HSV ICP27 gene;
 - (b) a nucleic acid encoding an ICP27 protein, or a functional equivalent thereof from a non-HSV herpes virus, which allows replication of said herpes virus to occur and which has a reduced ability to inhibit RNA splicing compared to wild-type HSV ICP27;
 - (c) AAV rep and cap genes;
 - (d) an AAV vector sequence; and optionally
 - (e) producer cells wherein said nucleic acid (b), said AAV rep and cap genes (c) and/or said AAV vector sequence (d) are incorporated into said herpes virus (a), are present on separate plasmids or are stably integrated into said producer cells (e).